

Sarah Riskind

We Were Once Strangers

for unaccompanied mixed choir

Text

We welcome the strangers in our land.
 They dwell among us, and we love them as ourselves,
 For we were once strangers, too. (Leviticus 19:34, paraphrased)

We learn to do good; seek justice, fight oppression.
 We defend the orphan, the abandoned, the hopeless. (Isaiah 1:17, paraphrased)
 They need our gifts– the poor and the stranger. (Leviticus 19:10, paraphrased)

*k'ezrach mikem yihyeh lachem hager hagar itchem
 v'ahavta lo kamocho
 ki-gerim heyitem b'erezt mitzrayim (Leviticus 19:34)*

Translation of Hebrew (RSV):
 The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you
 and you shall love him as yourself;
 for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

We welcome the strangers in our land.
 Let us gather all nations and languages to illuminate the glory of Creation. (Isaiah 66:18, paraphrased)
 We were once strangers, too.

Performance Notes

This piece was inspired by those who struggle to find welcome in new places. The optimistic textual changes transform a command into a personal commitment.

For the aleatoric section at the end, the timing is at the conductor's discretion, using the approximate spacing of measures indicated. Detailed instructions are as follows:

"of creation": improvise patterns on the text "of creation" with the notated pitches in any order; notes can be repeated

new pattern: on conductor's cue, singers gradually switch to the new set of pitches

"for we were once strangers": singers enter individually and continue repeating, in the same approximate tempo, with length of pauses at their discretion

We Were Once Strangers

Paraphrased from
Leviticus 19:10, 19:34 (Hebrew)
Isaiah 1:17, 66:18

Sarah Riskind

Ponderously ♩=48

SOPRANO

ALTO
p
Stran gers, stran-gers, stran-gers, stran-gers, stran-gers,

TENOR
p
Strangers, stran-gers, stran-gers, stran-gers, stran-gers,

BASS
p
Strangers, stran-gers, stran-gers, stran-gers, stran-gers,

Piano
(for rehearsal only)
p

A solo *mp*

S. Ah Ah Ah

A. *p* stran-gers, stran-gers, stran-gers, stran-gers,

T. *p* stran gers, stran-gers, stran-gers, stran gers.

B. *p* stran gers, stran-gers, stran-gers, stran gers.

Pno.

tutti mp **B**

S. We wel-come the stran-gers in ourland, we wel-come thestran-gers, we wel-come the

A. *mp* stran-gers. stran-gers, stran-gers, stran-gers,

T. *mp* stran gers, stran-gers, stran-gers, stran-gers,

B. *mp* stran gers, Stran-gers stran-gers, stran-gers,

Pno. *mp*

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23

S. good, we learn to seek jus - tice, we learn to seek jus - tice and fight op -

A. good, we learn to seek jus - tice, we learn to seek jus - tice and fight op -

T. good, we learn to seek jus - tice, we learn to seek jus - tice and fight op -

B. good, we learn to seek jus - tice, we learn to seek jus - tice and fight op -

Pno.

26

S. pres - sion. We de - fend the or - phan, the b - a - doned and the hope - less; they need our

A. pres - sion. or - phan, the ab - a - doned and the hope - less; they need our

T. pres - sion. ah

B. pres - sion. ah

Pno.

D Warmly ♩=100

30

S. *mp* gifts, the poor and the stran - ger

A. *mp* gifts, the poor and the stran - ger

T. *mp* k' ez- rach_ mi - kem yih - yeh la - chem ha - ger ha -

B. *mp* k' ez- rach_ mi - kem yih - yeh la - chem ha - ger ha -

Pno. *mp*

38

S. *mp* v' - a - hav - ta lo - mo - cha

A. *mp* v' - a - hav ta lo - ka - mo - cha mitz

T. *mp* gar_ it - chem ki - ge - rim he - yi - tem b' - e - retz mitz

B. *mp* gar_ it - chem ki - ge - rim he - yi - tem b' - e - retz mitz

Pno. *mp*

47 *mp* *cresc. poco a poco* **F**

S. *mp* *cresc. poco a poco*
ki-ge-rim he-yi - tem ki-ge-rim he - yi - tem b' - e - retz, b'-

A. *cresc. poco a poco*
ra - yim ki-ge-rim he - yi - tem ki-ge-rim he-yi - tem b' - e - retz

T. *cresc. poco a poco*
ra - yim ki-ge-rim he-yi - tem b' - e - retz, b'-

B. *cresc. poco a poco*
ra - yim ki-ge-rim he - yi - tem, ki-ge-rim he-yi - tem b' - e - retz

Pno. *cresc. poco a poco*

55 **G** **Tempo I** ♩=48

S. *f*
e - retz mitz - ra - - - yim.

A. *f* *f*
mitz - ra - - - yim. We wel-come the

T. *f*
e - retz mitz - ra - - - yim.

B. *f* *f*
mitz - ra - - - yim. We wel-come the

Pno. *f* *f*

60 *mf*

S. Ah ooh Ah ooh

A. stran - gers in our land, we wel - come the

T. stran - gers ooh

B. stran - gers in our land, we wel - come the

Pno. *mf*

62 *A tempo*

S. Ah ooh ooh

A. stran - gers, we wel - come the stran - gers,

T. stran - gers,

B. stran - gers, we wel - come the stran - gers. Let us ga - ther all

Pno. *p*

64 **H**

p cresc. poco a poco

S. Let us ga-ther our na - tions____ Let us ga-ther our

p cresc. poco a poco

A. Let us ga-ther all na - tions____ Let ga-ther our na - tions____ and

p cresc. poco a poco

T. Let us ga-ther all na - tions____ Let us ga-ther our na-tions and

p cresc. poco a poco

B. na-tions Let us ga-ther our na - tions____ and lan-gua - ges_

Pno.

66

S. na - tions and lan - gua - ges to il - lu - mine the glo - ry, glo - ry

A. lan - gua - ges to il - lu - mine the glo - ry, glo - ry

T. lan - gua - ges to il - lu - mine the glo - ry, glo - ry

B. to il - lu - mine the glo - ry, glo - ry

Pno.

The musical score consists of five staves. The top four staves are for the vocal parts: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The bottom two staves are for the piano (Pno.). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score begins at measure 66. The lyrics are: 'na - tions and lan - gua - ges to il - lu - mine the glo - ry, glo - ry'. The vocal parts feature triplets and a forte (f) dynamic marking. The piano accompaniment also features triplets. A large 'SAMPLE' watermark is overlaid on the page.

69

S. *ff* to il-lu-mine the glo - - ry of creati - - - - - **I** improvise patterns

A. *ff* to il-lu-mine the glo - - ry of creation improvise patterns *f*

T. *ff* to il-lu-mine the glo - - ry of cre-a - tion

B. *ff* glo - - ry of cre-a - tion

Pno. *ff* *f* improvise patterns

The musical score is for a choir and piano. It features four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "to il-lu-mine the glo - - ry of creati - - - - - of creation". The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and *f*, and performance instructions like "improvise patterns". A large "SAMPLE" watermark is overlaid on the page.

74

S. *mf* change patterns gradually of creation

A. *mf* change patterns gradually of creation

T. *f* improvise patterns of creation *mf* change patterns gradually of creation *mp* individual entrances For

B. *f* improvise patterns of creation *mf* change patterns gradually of creation

Pno. *mf* change patterns gradually *mp*

The musical score is for five parts: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), Bass (B.), and Piano (Pno.). It begins at measure 74. The Soprano and Alto parts have lyrics 'of creation' and performance instructions 'change patterns gradually' and '*mf*'. The Tenor part has lyrics 'of creation' and performance instructions '*f* improvise patterns', 'change patterns gradually', and '*mp* individual entrances'. The Bass part has lyrics 'of creation' and performance instructions '*f* improvise patterns' and 'change patterns gradually'. The Piano part has performance instructions '*mf* change patterns gradually' and '*mp*'. The Tenor part ends with the word 'For' in a box. A large 'SAMPLE' watermark is overlaid on the score.

84 cut off abruptly *p*

S. For we were once stran-gers, - too.

A. cut off abruptly *p* 3 For we were once stran-gers, - too.

T. cut off abruptly 3 For we were once stran-gers, - too.

B. cut off abruptly *p* 3 For we were once stran-gers, - too.

Pno. cut off abruptly *p* 3